

The Minister in Saudi Arabia (Eddy) to the Secretary of State 31

Jidda, February 22, 1945.

Sir: I have the honor to refer to the Legation's telegram No. 69, February 21, noon,³² and to report in greater detail the discussion of Zionism between the King and Mr. Churchill.

On the day of his return to Jidda, February 20, 1945 (see Legation's Despatch No. 73, February 21, 1945³²), the King asked me to return after lunch for private audience with him at which no one else was present, not even his body-guard. He said he wanted my government to know exactly what was said about Palestine during his conference with Mr. Churchill. The King's statement is closely paraphrased as follows:

"Mr. Churchill opened the subject confidently wielding the big stick. Great Britain had supported and subsidized me for twenty years, and had made possible the stability of my reign by fending off potential enemies on my frontiers. Since Britain had seen me through difficult days, she is entitled now to request my assistance in the problem of Palestine where a strong Arab leader can restrain fanatical Arab elements, insist on moderation in Arab councils, and effect a realistic compromise with Zionism. Both sides must be prepared to make concessions and he looks to me to help prepare the Arab concessions.

"I replied that, as he well knows, I have made no secret of my friendship and gratitude to Great Britain, a friend I have always been ready to help as I shall always help her and the Allies against their enemies. I told him, however, that what he proposes is not help to Britain or the Allies, but an act of treachery to the Prophet and all believing Muslims which would wipe out my honor and destroy my soul. I could not acquiesce in a compromise with Zionism much less take any initiative. Furthermore, I pointed out, that even in the preposterous event that I were willing to do so, it would not be a favor to Britain, since promotion of Zionism from any quarter must indubitably bring bloodshed, wide-spread disorder in the Arab lands, with certainly no benefit to

Britain or anyone else. By this time Mr. Churchill had laid the big stick down.

“In turn I requested assurance that Jewish immigration to Palestine would be stopped. This Mr. Churchill refused to promise, though he assured me that he would oppose any plan of immigration which would drive the Arabs out of Palestine or deprive them of the means of livelihood there. I reminded him that the British and their Allies would be making their own choice between (1) a friendly and peaceful Arab World, and (2) a struggle to the death between Arab and Jew if unreasonable immigration of Jews to Palestine is renewed. In any case, the formula must be one arrived at by and with Arab consent.”

Respectfully yours,

William A. Eddy

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1945v08/d671>